



# DPW UPDATE

August 2003

Volume 17, Issue 8

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## Donated Photos Tell DPW Story

By Bill Polick, Editor



*Road construction crew poses with their equipment at Marrón Canyon during Vista Way construction.*



*Today Vista Way is an asphalt ribbon in North County.*



*Earl Terry, son Joe and family pooch with Earl's truck.*

You can almost hear clanking and grinding levers and gears on the old machines in the photograph. There, in a cut through a hill, sit five trucks, a tractor, grader, steam shovel and a dozen men for whom these are tools of the trade.

1928—the year after Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs for the New York Yankees, the year before the great stock market crash that threw the world into depression. Flappers danced the Charleston, Mr. Rogers was born and Amsterdam hosted the Summer Olympics.

Ernest Childs was County Surveyor and headed the Paving Commission whose responsibility was building and maintaining roads in San Diego. Earl Terry was a new employee working on the roads in

those days.

Terry's niece, Bonnie Briscoe of Safford, Arizona, recently donated photos of Terry and other road workers taken in '28 to the department. One, taken at the Marrón Canyon cut during construction of Vista Way near Bonsall, shows equipment lined neatly with bare rolling hills in the background. It must have been an important project at the time to send a photographer 40 miles into the hinterland to stage the shot.

Another photo shows Terry with his son Joe perched on the hood with his dog.

Briscoe also sent a copy of a letter sent to Terry May 3, 1937, from District 5 Supervisor Bryan A. Sweet. That letter compliments Terry and his fellow workers on "the splendid cooperation that the citizens of your locality received from you during our rainy season just past."

That letter also offers examples of the hard work done by road crews of the time: "I fully appreciate the difficulties that you were working under during this time, but surmounting these you and your boys have done a splendid job..."

The significance of the photos and letters is not lost on Briscoe.

"Even though I am not from your area, I was fascinated with these 'photo moments' and wanted to share them," she wrote. "If only these pictures could talk."

The pictures do speak—of the pride these men had in their work, of the rural character of North County, of the difficult job crews had with the equipment available.

Vista Way hums with tires on asphalt today. Motorists zip through the area now not knowing the legacy of Earl Terry and his road crew cohorts.



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## County ID Badge For More Than Identification

Consider your County ID badge your “passport to employment.” Could you imagine arriving at the airport for a trip to Tahiti, Europe or even Cancun, and not having your passport or driver’s license? Valid identification protects you.

County ID badges are required for the same reason. That’s why they should be worn at all times. If badges are lost or broken, they *can* be replaced.

Here are some tips for caring for your ID badge:

- Keep them away from direct sunlight and intense heat, such as car dashboards, irons and clothes dryers, to prevent melting and distortion.
- Keep them away from powerful liquids like laundry detergent, alcohol, and gasoline that might erase pictures and print.
- Do not puncture your card; if you need a hole punched, see the Administrative Support staff.
- Never use your badge for any purpose other than County facility access and identification.
- Make sure your badge is worn above the waist and visible at all times.

Following these simple guidelines means better protection for your badge, yourself, your work location and ultimately, the County.

## Safety & Wellness

### Safety’s Important At Home Too

*By Carl Spiron, Safety Officer*

Often we forget how important Safety is at home. A good friend of mine had a very close call a few weeks ago. He went out to do a little preparation for a weekend BBQ with family and friends. To his dismay he found a large column of ants that decided to attack his backyard.

These were not the guests he wanted. So off to the garage to find the old trusty “ant and roach killer. Returning to the backyard, he sprayed large quantities of the insecticide on the ants. His eight-year-old son came up behind him and asked what he was doing. Surprised, my friend got the mist into his eyes and mouth.

Being proactive, he went into the garage and washed out his eyes. Problem solved. Not quite. In a short time he noticed his front lip swelling and it soon spread to his mouth and throat. Not breathing well, and feeling hot and very sick, he decided to read the can. You know like we are trained to do, look at the MSDS sheets (material safety data sheets) and wear the right protective gear. To his dismay the label did not say much except to wash out his eyes and seek medical attention.

Feeling very bad, he asked his wife how he looked. She loaded him in the car and off to the hospital they went.

After a while the effects of his reaction to the chemicals wore off and, combined with a doctor’s care, he went home.

There is no doubt that my friend now has a much clearer understanding about the importance of home safety and protecting the most valuable gifts we have, our family and ourselves. We want to remember to wear the correct respirator and eye protection if we are going to spray large quantities of chemicals, and to protect our skin from absorbing the chemicals by wearing a long sleeve shirt.

Be safe and have a great summer.



# DPW UPDATE

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## Training

### Rule 1: Don't Let Anyone on Your Team Fail

*By Kirsten Aaboe-Hope, Training Officer*

Every team goes through stages of growth and each team member deals with common issues. If left unattended, hidden undercurrents can inhibit a group's chances of functioning as an effective team. Every group needs to spend some time on activities not directly related to work, activities that build understanding and support in the group. Here are some of the issues that are often not spoken about, but are common to us all:

- Personal Identity on the Team: It is natural for team members to wonder how they fit into the team. The most common worries are those associated with these questions: Do I feel like an insider or an outsider? Do I belong? Do I want to belong? What can I do to fit in? Who's calling the shots? Who has the most influence? Will I have influence? Will I be listened to? Will I be allowed to contribute? How will I get along with other team members? Will we be able to cooperate?
- Relationships Between Team Members: With few exceptions, team members want the team to succeed, to make improvements, and to work cooperatively with each other. They extend personal concerns to the team: "What kind of relationships will characterize this team? How will members of different ranks interact? Will we be friendly and informal, or will it be strictly business? Will we be open or guarded in what we say? Will we be able to work together, or will we argue and disagree all the time? Will people like or dislike me? Will I like or dislike them?"

When teams first form, or new members come into the group, each team goes through four growth stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing.

1. Forming: When a team first forms, team members are like hesitant swimmers standing by the side of the pool, dabbling their toes in the water. They're tentative, unsure, and reluctant to jump in.
2. Storming: Storming is probably the most difficult stage for the team. It is as if the team members jump in the water, and thinking they may drown, start to thrash around. They begin to realize the tasks involved are different and more difficult than they imagined, and people can become testy, blaming or overzealous.
3. Norming: During this stage, members reconcile competing loyalties and responsibilities. They accept the team, team ground rules, their roles and others' roles in the team, and the individuality of the team members. Emotional conflict is reduced since previously competitive relationships become more cooperative. They stop thrashing and start helping each other stay afloat.
4. Performing: By this stage, the team has settled its relationships and expectations. People begin performing: diagnosing and solving problems, and choosing and implementing changes. At last team members have discovered and accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses. Now they swim in concert.

Every team goes through these stages and each team member deals with the issues mentioned above. When the team comes together, roles and responsibilities are defined and accepted, differences and communication styles are worked through, the team becomes an efficient, effective, highly productive unit.



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## Division News

### *Engineering Services*

#### **County to Create Bicycle Transportation Plan**

Where should San Diego County's bicycle facilities be? What will they look like? How will they be used?

These questions and more are the focus in development of the Bicycle Transportation Plan for unincorporated areas of the County. The goal is to create a plan to serve recreational and commuting cyclists, identify existing and needed facilities, describe bicycle policies and programs, and provide a strategy for implementation.

Tom Hart is working with local groups and agencies to meet several goals—to promote bicycle transportation in the County, increase bicycle transportation, improve the local and regional bikeway network and increase the benefits of cycling.

"This is an important and comprehensive project," Hart said. "We hope to have a high quality plan ready for approval by the Board of Supervisors by the end of the year."

### *Management Services*

#### **Spiron New Safety Officer**

Carl Spiron, DPW's new Departmental Safety Coordinator, claims he's not a policeman; he sees himself as a constructive, proactive safety coordinator with a wealth of experience and a love for working in the field.



Safety isn't what Spiron originally set out to do. In the 70's, he managed shop, supply and service sections for California Electric Works, a job that encouraged his certification as Journeyman Wireman by the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers. He then attended Southwestern College to become a nurse, but instead earned his associate's degree in general studies and took a job as fuel-truck driver for Daley Corporation. With Daley, Spiron paved countless County roadways, as well as Gillespie Field. He worked his way up and was nominated to the Safety Director position because of his medical background and knowledge of worker compensation issues.

In 1998, Bailey Construction recruited him to supervise safety measures for the demolition and reconstruction of Disneyland's "Downtown Disney" quarter. From there, he went to Clark Construction to oversee the initial carving and creation of SDSU's trolley extension and the beginnings of the new Padres' ballpark. He also spent 15 months in Hawaii in a similar position for Dick Pacific Contracting Company before landing his job with DPW.

"When I began in construction 30 years ago, safety wasn't as vogue as it is now because the impact to management was so small," said Spiron. "The objective now is to maintain a healthy workforce in addition to controlling costs."

"I hold true to the fundamental idea that employees are both a profit center and an organization's greatest asset."



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## *Transportation*

### **Drinkwater Takes Airports Helm**

Peter Drinkwater is the new director of County Airports. A pilot with more than 1500 hours in the cockpit, the retired Air Force Lt. Colonel takes the helm of the eight-airport system.

Drinkwater has an extensive aviation background in California and elsewhere. He served as General Manager of Ontario International Airport where he oversaw expansion of the \$2.5 billion facility. He also served as Commander, Production Flight Test Installation at Palmdale Regional Airport.